

CHAPTER VII.

TOURING.

“The objects of touring are to gain acquaintances General. with and to test the work of subordinates, to make sure that orders have been carried out; to settle disputes and difficult questions on the spot; to come into contact with the people; to ascertain their real wants; to learn their modes of daily life and ways of thinking; to get a knowledge of the land and its administration, and agricultural and industrial methods; to watch the working of all Government agencies. Nothing affecting the interest of Government or of the people is beyond the Assistant or Deputy Collector’s ken.”

The following instructions have been issued by Government in G. R., R. D., No. 5230/33, dated 8th January 1937, regarding touring in rural areas and maintaining close and personal touch with the villages.

“2. *Amount of touring.*—In the case of Prant Officers, a rigid minimum cannot be prescribed in view of the varying conditions obtaining in different districts, but the standard should be 210 days touring in the year. The Commissioners should be asked to scrutinise the diaries of Prant Officers with a view to seeing that they do not neglect outlying places and tracts where there are no bungalows.

“3. *Frequency of visits to villages.*—As regards Prant Officers the standard which Government expect—this

requirement is not to be interpreted as a formal minimum—is that every village should be visited at least once in the course of five years.

“4. *Tents*.—Government consider that Prant Officers must camp away from main roads and off the beaten track if they are to acquire an intimate knowledge of their charges. Hence even in the districts well supplied with bungalows tent camps should be made.

“5. *Duration of Camps*.—Government agree with the Commissioners that long camps are better than short ones. The Commissioners should be asked to take this into consideration when scrutinising the diaries of Prant Officers.

“6. *Continuity of tours*.—The Commissioners should impress upon Prant Officers the desirability of their so arranging their programme as ordinarily to avoid hurried tours and frequent visits to headquarters.

“8. *Inspection Registers*.—The village inspection Register shown as an accompaniment to this Resolution should be printed as a standard form and maintained by all Prant Officers. The column for remarks is intended for the recording of notes which may be of value at subsequent visits. Collectors and Commissioners should check the form from time to time.”

“ Register of villages inspected by the.....

Serial No.	Name of village.	Date of inspection in the Revenue years.					Remarks.
		193 -3	193 -3	193 -3	193 -3	193-3	

“ Before starting in November, a line of tour for the next seven months should be roughly marked out, which will as far as possible, bring the camp at one time or other within touch of every part of the charge and will include at least one visit to every taluka headquarters and Mahalkari's station.”

In planning a tour it is well to look up the District Planning volume of the Bombay Gazetteer and the Survey and Settlement Reports of the Talukas to be visited, especially the older Reports. If your office is not provided with the one inch to the mile maps of your charge, inquire if you can get them for it, and if funds are not available, ask the Collector for a grant and see if meanwhile you may borrow his copies of these maps. These 1"=1 mile maps are invaluable to touring officers, for they usually give you sufficient data to find your a tour

way about the country with scarcely any other assistance, as roads, cart tracks, footpaths, village boundaries etc. are all clearly shown. Have them mounted in such a way that you can take one or two sheets in your coat pocket while riding, and you will find that they save much time, as you can ride along without having to accommodate the pace of your horse to that of the village Mahar who is showing you the way on foot.

Touring is made far more interesting if you take an interest in the past history of your charge, or in its present inhabitants, or its fauna, or its flora.

The District Gazetteer will give you references to most of the historical works that refer to your District and if you want to examine these further, join the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society so as to have the use of its extremely good library. It has an admirable system for touring officers by which a box containing up to 12 volumes is sent to and from you in Districts. The Library is also useful for the provision of lighter reading.

If you are interested in animals or plants, join the Bombay Natural History Society, which publishes an admirable journal.

If you want to shoot big game, get Dunbar Brander's Wild Animals of Central India, whatever other books you may read on the subject.

In any case read "Tribes on my Frontier" and "Behind the Bungalow" by EHA. and if you do

not before know much about keeping a horse, buy "Indian Notes for Horse owners".*

Before starting on tour make out a detailed list of camps, with dates, for the next month or so, and send copies to officers of other Departments in the District and to the Mamlatdars, Police Sub-Inspectors etc. in your charge, and also to the local newspapers for general information. It is particularly important to give plenty of notice of your detailed programme to the Mamlatdars, who have their own duties to perform and cannot with efficiency put these off at a moment's notice to accompany you on your tour. Incidentally once you have got some acquaintance of your charge, it will not be necessary, nor advisable, always to have the Mamlatdar with you.

In this connection note that it is desirable that requests from officers of other Departments for the presence of the Mamlatdar should come *through you*, so that if you consider a request unreasonable or the Mamlatdar is busy on other work, you can reply politely that it will be more convenient for another date to be fixed as the Mamlatdar will not be available on the date proposed.

Excepting in the case of flying camps referred to below, do not camp for less than 4 or 5 full days or so at one place. Less than this does not give sufficient time for the news to spread around that the Assistant

Length of
Camps.

*Two books of short stories by E. Cox, late Indian Police—"John Carruther Indian Policeman" and "the Adventures of John Carruthers"—give a not very exaggerated account of the ingenuity of the classes which you may have appearing before you as accused in Court.

Collector is in camp and for any persons with disputes or grievances to make up their minds that it will be worth their while to approach him. Hurried touring, however, is of course necessary when inspecting crops in a bad season, when a large area has to be seen in a very short time.

At Taluka Headquarters your camps will probably be of 10 days duration, if your examination of the Mamlatdar's office and his records is to be thorough; but it is not necessary for you to spend the whole of the 10 days there. You will find it useful to make a flying camp or two with light kit and no clerks in inaccessible places, where heavy tents and records cannot conveniently be taken. Therefore in addition to your large tents which you use for ordinary camps, have one or two small tents, 80 lbs. or 120 lbs. or so, for such camps and for shikar. In a forest country you can often camp quite comfortably in a chappar (hut made of grass or leafy branches) erected by the local villagers.

Transport. The normal method of moving camp in the past was by bullock carts, which were customarily liable for this service and, though the ancient system of impressment of carts for conveyances of touring officers' kit has been terminated (G. R., R. D., No. 8482/28, of 5th August 1935), where there are no made roads, carts hired for the trip are still the usual method of transport.

But the advent of the motor bus and lorry has greatly improved touring conditions and comfort. Most Taluka headquarters are connected by made roads, and on

such roads it is usually not only quicker and more convenient, but cheaper to engage motors to transport one's kit.

Where bullock carts are used, payment should be prompt and adequate, and in this connection, make sure from local enquiry what are the market rates of hire for carts in various parts of your charge and see that you pay the full rate. Some Mamlatdars are careless in reporting the market rate for notification in the Gazette, or inclined to think that Government officers ought to have a rate below the market rate.

In the villages there are often no shops where you and your staff can obtain your supplies, and by custom these are provided by the villagers and the village Bania on payment. In the past there was an idea that there should be a regular Government rate laid down for all manner of supplies to you and your camp, at well below the market prices, and you should learn the approximate local prices and see that you are not under-charged. You should insist that all your staff, peons, sepoy, etc., pay cash for everything supplied and let this fact be known. In small villages you will probably have to obtain some of your own supplies through the village Patel, who will produce a bill for these at the end of your camp. It is practically impossible for you to know whether the money you give the Patil will really find its way to the actual supplier, though probably more will do so if paid through the Patil than if you left the matter to your servants. The payment of the Patel's bill in public with a friendly discussion of any of the rates which

appear to you to be too low, provides some safeguard that he will not be able to get away with the money on the quiet.

In the bigger villages of course your servants can buy supplies direct in the bazar and little need be obtained through the Patil.

Now-a-days, on looking at the Patil's bill, it is quite possible that you will find that you have been charged excessive prices instead of too little, on the assumption that you will not check the bill. In such cases having regard to the relative official positions of yourself and of the Patil, it is impossible for you to suggest to the Patil that he better reduce the amount. You must suffer to be cheated as a result of not having time to pay everything direct yourself, and you will have to look pleasant and hand over to the Patil the amount demanded without question. *Thereafter*, of course you should make enquiries and if you find that the Patil has been deliberately overcharging you, call on him for explanation. But you must not get your money back! Probably public contempt for having been detected cheating the Assistant Collector and for being made to keep his ill-gotten gains, will be enough to prevent a Patil trying similar games in future.

Peons and village servants. It is customary to have attached to your camp one or two peons from the Mamlatdar's office who from their local knowledge will be used for making arrangements, e.g., for getting village servants, for pitching tents, and for obtaining supplies. Do not forget

when leaving a taluka that it is customary to tip these low-paid officials.

In addition tents are usually pitched and odd jobs done by the village servants, such as the Village Mahars, and a watch is kept over the camp at night by one or more somnolent Village Watchmen. Though these village servants are in some cases remunerated by grant of inam lands for their services, this remuneration is very small and you should tip them yourself. You will find crowds of them attending your departure and to give each one of the 15 or 20 Mahars who turned out to help to pitch your tents, adequate remuneration will be beyond your means and a lump tip to them in general is indicated. It is somewhat difficult to know what to give them, as you do not want to be mean, while lavishness may embarrass less well off officers. Perhaps the following scale may be found useful :—

For each day of a camp 8 annas to the Village Mahars and 4 annas to the Village Watchmen.

One officer was reputed always to scatter a handful of small change on leaving a camp, to be scrambled for by the village servants, but this seems ostentatious.

You will find that some one was employed to bring water to your camp. Whether he was a village servant of some kind or an ordinary labourer, he should be paid at the appropriate local rate for daily labour.

You may also find that the village Mahars or Jaglyas brought grass or other fodder for your horse etc. and that it has not been charged in the bill on the plea of being a customary service. This is not correct. Grass and fodder have a commercial value, as, even

though it may be plentiful, the labour of cutting or gathering it has to be considered. Grass and fodder brought by Village servants should be paid for at the market value.

Riding.

Except in one or two districts, e.g., Kanara, where a horse is liable to go sick, or parts of Ratnagiri District where the country is too broken to be rideable, an Assistant Collector, if he is going to carry out his work properly, *must keep and ride* a horse. A motor car cannot reach a great many villages and though of course it is possible to get to such villages on foot, this wastes much time which might be better employed, and the officer is tired out before his day's office work is even begun, if he has tramped 10 to 15 miles to and from a village in the morning. In this connection see also the need of a horse for crop inspection (p. 89).

As Government give an allowance of Rs. 55 per month to Assistant Collectors who keep a suitable mount, there is no reason why every Assistant Collector should not ride.

Motor Car.

A motor car is not a necessity. There are motor bus services practically everywhere, and probably, taking into account depreciation, etc. it is actually cheaper to hire a motor bus whenever you want to get anywhere by road rather than to keep your own car.

But convention and the present standard of living makes a car a desirable, though not a necessary, possession in addition to your horse, though a bachelor can get on quite well with a motor cycle and side car.

It is a matter of your pocket and your conscience whether you buy a new car or a second hand one. The main argument against the new car compared with a second hand one, is that consciously or otherwise, you will be disinclined to knock it about over bad roads, and so will confine your work to the villages on the main roads, nor will you willingly leave your new car to the peon, who drove your predecessor's ramshackle Ford, to drive, when you ought to be riding across country to visit villages off the roads.

Arrange the programme of villages which you will visit at each camp as soon as you get to the camps, bearing in mind the various cases which you have reserved for personal inspection, and any villages about which any thing of importance is in progress, or where the work of the village officers, Circle Inspectors or Mamlatdars may need particular check. If you let the village officers know the date of your visit, this gives them time to inform the villagers of your coming and to warn anyone whose presence may be needed. Village visiting.

Of course if you want to make a surprise visit to a village, you will not inform the Village officers beforehand, and if you want it to be actually a surprise visit, you had better announce overnight that you will visit a village in the opposite direction that morning. An official with an uneasy conscience, who does not want the Assistant Collector poking about on his own in any particular village, has pretty certainly arranged with your peons or servants for early information of your doings, and if you have arranged no work for the next morning and yet tell your syce to have the horse ready

at 7, he will at once infer that you are going somewhere on the quiet and will take steps to "anticipate" your inquiries.

Do not attempt to visit too many villages in one morning. If you are to make a complete examination of the village accounts in any one village, that will take most of your morning. As you will have a very large number of villages in your charge, it is well to vary your procedure somewhat, and some mornings to do a fairly thorough examination of one or two villages, another day, after doing an examination of one, to ride on for an hour's talk with the villagers of another. Sometimes ride round 3 or 4 villages in the morning and have a short discussion on local topics with the inhabitants of each village. In the cold weather it is not much use starting out very early to visit villages as the villagers will not be up by the time you get there.

On getting to a village you will sit down in the Chavdi or Chora, to examine the village accounts and talk to the inhabitants. Remember to treat the Village officers with respect so as to enhance their prestige among the villagers, and also so treat the Sarpanch and members of the Village Panchayat and any members of Local Boards who may be present. You will probably find that while the other villagers sit on the floor, the Sarpanch Members of the Panchayat like to sit on a bench or chairs, if any are available, as this asserts their position of local importance.

When you have finished your inspection of the village accounts and your talk with the villagers, go round the village, see the school, the water supply and

any other items of interest or of village needs. Appendix A from the Village Improvement Manual will give you an idea of some points to which you can give attention while going round the village. In particular impress on the villagers the need for cleanliness and for good water supply. Also see if there is any vacant Government land on the edge of, or just outside, the Gavtan which can be used for building new houses to relieve congestion among the Scheduled castes, or for provision of manure pits and latrines. You will find that the Mamlatdars and subordinates are sometimes unintelligent in this matter and inclined to consider Government's financial interests alone are of importance in disposing of Government land, oblivious of the villagers' convenience and public health.

Before leaving the village always enter up your visit in the Village Visit Book, briefly noting points on which you have issued orders so that the Circle Inspector and the Mamlatdar on their next visit may check that your orders have been complied with.

Land Revenue is collected in two instalments, the dates of these being fixed for each village according to the kind of crops grown therein. Obviously the Land Revenue should not be collected before the cultivator's crop is harvested, or he will not have sold his produce and got the money to pay, and on the other hand, it must not be collected so long after the crop is harvested, that in the meanwhile he will have spent the money on some other less laudable object. Find out the instalment dates for various parts of your Prant, and watch the collections carefully from the periodical reports

Collection
of Land
Revenue
and
arrears.

which the Mamlatdars will send you (paragraph 15, p. 262, Revenue Accounts Manual). Also always when visiting a village see how the collection of Land Revenue is progressing; the total amount collected up to date is seen from the last chalan V. F. X for money remitted to the Taluka, and the collections since the last remittance from V. F. IX.

“The district officer should ever be on his guard to put down contumacy on the side of the rayats, and ill-timed repression on the side of subordinate officials.”

If you find there are arrears, call up those villagers who have not paid, and inquire why they have not. Remember that there are many plausible persons who have many excuses for non-payment, and that it is not fair to the punctual payer that the deliberate “procrastitute” should be given time to pay which the other did not get. Under the Land Revenue Code you can inflict fine up to one-fourth of the amount due when it is not paid in time. In cases of contumacy or deliberate neglect to pay in time, do not hesitate to impose a fine. In years of poor crops of course latitude is necessary, even if the crops are not so bad as to require suspension of land revenue, but for this you will have to judge by experience. You will usually in normal years find that, when you ask a villager in his own village, he will be willing to pay up at once.

Jama-
bandi.

“Jamabāndi” means literally “fixing the demand”. In days when there was no Survey, and the demand was really fixed each year by the Collector, and distributed among his Kamavisdars by Mahals or Parganas,

by whom (in Gujerat) it was apportioned among the Desais who were responsible for Villages or Tarafs, the Jamabandi was a most important function which keenly interested every rayat. Moreover it took place before the collection, and not after. Probably the rayats and Mukhis or Bhagdars would have refused to pay anything until first a formal Jamabandi had taken place, at which they could have made themselves heard.

“But nowadays, the demand for fixed Land Revenue is settled by the Survey Department, and remissions or suspensions are based upon that fixed demand according to rules of general application; while the demand for fluctuating Land Revenue is fixed by individual orders of proper authorities from time to time. There is no Jamabandi, in the sense of a settlement of the demand, to be performed; but the process is partly an audit of the last year's accounts, partly an inspection to see that the accounts of the current year are up to date, and partly a general test of the work of the village officers.”

(P. 334, *Manual of Revenue Accounts*, Fifth Edition, 1931.)

The Revenue Accounts Manual gives instructions for the detailed audit of village accounts for Jamabandi, to which reference should be made, but in popular parlance Jamabandi still means the formal occasion on which the Collector or Assistant Collector meets the assembled village officers. You should fix various places in each taluka for Jamabandi so as to avoid calling village officers too far from their homes. When all the village officers have assembled and

settled down on the carpets provided, you take your seat at a table before them, and the village officers of each village are called up in turn. You formally sign the Tharavband of the village and hand it to the Revenue Patil. You will ask him, the Police Patil and the Talati, whether they have anything to say either about the village or other matters and take down a note of anything which you think needs enquiry or of any improvements which you think can be made. Do not forget to look at the village map, and if such is torn, take a note of it and have it replaced at Government expense. Pansupari is handed to each village officer, and then those of the next village are called.

At Jamabandi rewards are presented publicly for good work to village officers and village servants, usually in the shape of pagris or cloths and sometimes of weapons, and on occasion certificates of merit or Afrinamas are given to other persons who have done good work.

After all have come up, take the opportunity to get the opinion of the village officers on any matter of local or general interest that may be exercising public opinion, for instance a general discussion on Village Improvement work will probably produce a number of useful suggestions from Patils who know from experience where the various shoes pinch the villagers.

It is a good plan to make the Jamabandi of more interest by getting officers of other Departments to attend and to give short addresses on their departmental matters, e.g., the Deputy Director of Agriculture may give a lecture on some agricultural improvements, or in

irrigated tracts, the Executive Engineer or Assistant Engineer in charge of Irrigation can probably explain any new rules to the Patils and thus prevent misunderstanding in the villages, and at the same time he can answer questions concerning irrigators' difficulties and explain the Department's point of view. If you can manage to get the Village Uplift van or the Village Improvement Committee magic lantern or cinema, hold your Jamabandi towards the evening and give the village officers a propaganda show. Anything which increases the village officers' sense of their own importance and at the same time excites their interest in improvements is very valuable.

You will find instructions regarding village improvement in the Village Improvement Manual, its second Part the Village Panchayat's Manual, and various Government orders. Village Improvement. Therefore no detailed remarks are given here. It is useful to know what has been done in other provinces, for instance "Rusticus Loquitur" and "The Punjab Peasant in Prosperity and Debt" by M. L. Darling, and "Socrates in an Indian Village" by F. L. Brayne give much information. Get these and similar books and read them—very likely the Collector's Library will have them.

The main duty of the Assistant Collector regarding Village Improvement is, first, to infuse as much enthusiasm as possible for this work into subordinate officials and into all non-officials with whom he may come in contact, and, secondly, to see that all Departments of Government co-operate and do not relapse into working in water-tight compartments, each not

letting the other know what it is doing. Such external stimulus and co-ordination can only be provided by the Revenue Department which, from its duties of general administration, has to be in touch with all activities of the villager's life and with all Departments of Government that affect the villager. You will probably find that the work of Village Improvement in your Sub-Division will depend directly on the amount of interest you yourself take in it. It is not suggested that you should neglect your other duties, but the fact that the Assistant Collector is interested in the cleanliness of villages, improved poultry, experimental crops, better irrigation, vaccination of children, etc., etc., and all the other activities of various departments, will greatly encourage both the villagers and local officers of other Departments concerned, to do what they can for improvement of the villages.

If you should meet with obstruction or indifference in the Village Improvement work from any officer of any other Department, do not enter into acrimonious correspondence with him yourself, but refer the matter demi-officially to your Collector, who will probably get that officer's superior to give him the appropriate stimulus.

However keen you may be on the improvement of the villages and however much work you may be able to put in yourself for that end, it is important not to be discouraged by lack of visible progress. The Indian village has probably existed in its present form, or something like it, for 5,000 years or so, and it is idle to expect that any great improvement can be achieved in a short space of time. Therefore, do not

relax your efforts even though the results are not apparent. Probably if 5 or 10 years hence you come back to the same district, you will find that your work has by then had some effect and is still remembered.